

Where I'm From

inspired by George Ella Lyon, by Charles Ramey (Pike Co, KY)

I am from coal buckets

from Head & Shoulders shampoo and Dawn dish washin' liquid

I am from forested hills and hollers,

10a.m. sunrises, 5p.m. sunsets

Its sweet mountain shelter, its isolation and ignorance

I am from poison ivy and wild ginseng

I am from crowded family gatherin's, bear hugs and belly-ache laughs

from Grandmas and Grandpas. Hill, Adkins, Epling, and Ramey

I am from faded bent knee and caring calluses

from the whippin' and the Golden Rule

I am from Sunday mornin' hand-shakes, Unity Freewill Baptist

sworpin', regretin', rejoicin', and repentin'

I am from Rockhouse, Appalachia with an achu not Appalayshu.

The snap of white half-runners, warm cast iron cornbread, and soup beans

From the flowerbed-weedin' copperhead bite and Mamaw Ramey

the pitch black of minin' and home safe again, fathers, sons, and brothers

From fingers worn stitchin', crochet', and treasured moments in dusty albums

Mountaintop 4-wheelin', campin' and snowy holler nights

I am from coal heat and toasty feet.

I am from flat-footin' to the fiddle's tune and the banjo's twang.

I am from the absence of the long (i), where right is rat and night is nat.

And their ain't no (g) on -ing.